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PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #2367 3461938
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 121938Z DEC 06
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4873
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1321
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1157
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0649
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1063

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 002367

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [MARR](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: MARTISSANT HOTSPOT FOR GANG VIOLENCE

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 2202

¶1. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Summary: The murder of a Haitian National Police officer during the December 3 elections sparked a new wave of gang violence in the Martissant neighborhood in the south of Port-au-Prince. MINUSTAH presence in the area is constant, but the HNP only conducts roving patrols. The violence stems from fighting between rival gangs who operate small-scale rackets in Martissant. End summary.

¶3. (U) Between eight and 12 people have died as a result of gang-related violence in Martissant since Sunday, December 3 (election day) and the situation remains very tense. The fighting is between rival gangs, but gang members have also killed bystanders. Merchants who normally line the streets are staying indoors, and those who can flee the area are attempting to do so. One HNP officer, Jean Andre Noel, was killed on election day as he was exiting his voting center. Noel was not on duty at the time, however, and was reportedly involved in gang activities.

¶4. (SBU) The MINUSTAH presence in Martissant has not changed since our last report (ref A), according to Western Department coordinator Jean-Philippe Laberge. There are Sri Lankan troops at 20 fixed points in the area around the clock, as well as roving patrols. Troop levels were increased for election day but have since returned to the normal number of approximately 100.

¶5. (SBU) At the moment, HNP patrols that cover Martissant originate from a commissariat several miles away on Route Nationale 2 in Carrefour. MINUSTAH is now refurbishing a building at the most contested intersection in Martissant to use as a local base for HNP officers as well as civil affairs staff and peacekeeping troops. MINUSTAH's goal is to have 24 hour HNP presence in Martissant, consisting of 7 officers each working 8 hour shifts. However, the process of getting the headquarters set up and the HNP in place has been inching along since July, and Laberge did not want to put any timeframe on when the process might actually be complete.

¶6. (SBU) Gang activity in Martissant is smaller-scale than that of Cite Soleil but growing in intensity. The gangs

extort money from the community by controlling local water sources and commerce and charge taxes on tap-taps (local public transportation) that pass through the area. They also participate in some simple kidnapping operations. Any drug running in the area is local, not international. The gangs are "for sale" to local political candidates for electoral purposes, but as of yet have not been exploited by national politicians, according to Laberge.

17. (SBU) Comment: Both MINUSTAH and HNP sources cite Martissant as evidence of the failure of their own security policy. The intense focus on Cite Soleil without a decisive move against the gang leaders there has kept MINUSTAH and the HNP tied down in that neighborhood with little results. In the meantime, gang members and criminals elsewhere in Port-au-Prince are increasingly emboldened.
SANDERSON